

KDHE Health Officials Hit the Road on 'Flu Tour' of Kansas

Dr. Howard Rodenberg, KDHE Division of Health Director and State Health Officer, and Dr. Gail Hansen, State Epidemiologist, led 13 public forums across Kansas to discuss influenza, including pandemic influenza, avian flu and the state's pandemic preparedness plan.

The forums, which featured a discussion of what to expect if avian and/or pandemic influenza appears in the U.S., and ways to limit the spread, were held in Kansas City, Topeka, Salina, Hiawatha, Pittsburg, Chanute, Olathe, Wichita, Hays, Dodge City, Hays, Lawrence and Manhattan. During the tour, Rodenberg and Hansen also visited 14 local health departments and Indian Health Services in Holton to discuss influenza with local health and government officials.

In addition, Rodenberg and Hansen discussed guidelines on seeking medical care, influenza symptoms, the importance of vaccinations, the products available for treatment (antivirals), and the differences between various types of influenza. A question and answer session followed each presentation.

All interested members of the general public including business owners, chambers of commerce, local school and government officials were encouraged to attend. Local media were also encouraged to attend the forum in the area they serve.



Dr. Howard Rodenberg, second from left, fields a question during the KDHE Flu Tour stop at the Shawnee County Health Department. The Tour conducted 13 public forums across Kansas to help citizens prepare for a potential pandemic flu outbreak. KDHE's state epidemiologist, Dr. Gail Hansen, is at Rodenberg's left.

The forum held at the Shawnee County Health Agency in Topeka was videotaped and is being replayed on City4, the City of Topeka's public access channel on Cox Cable.

The presentation used in the public forums will also be presented to state employees on Dec. 6, in Memorial Hall at 10th and Jackson Streets.